

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-12 IO-13 RSR-01 /132 W
----- 089398

R 311700 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2077

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USUN NEW YORK 545

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 3095

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, TS

SUBJECT: NO REACTION IN TUNIS YET TO ABBA EBAN ANNOUNCEMENT

REF: TUNIS 2963

DEPARTMENT PASS CAIRO

1. THOUGH GOT AWARE OF REPORTS THAT ABBA EBAN ANNOUNCED IN
KNESSET MAY 30 THAT GOI READY TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA,
TUNISIAN PRESS AND RADIO HAVE NOT YET CARRIED EBAN' S ANNOUNCEMENT
AND FONOFF SO FAR DECLINES TO COMMENT. FONOFF CHIEF OF ARAB
WORLD DIVISION (MONCEF SKHIRI) VERY MUCH INTERESTED BY ISRAELI
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REACTION TO BOURGUIBA' S CORRIERE DELLA SERA INTERVIEW (REFTEL)
BUT STATED HE UNABLE COMMENT IN ANY WAY UNTIL FONMIN MASMOUDI
RETURNS TO TUNIS TODAY (MAY 31). HE SUGGESTED STRONGLY THAT
WE HAVE TALK WITH MASMOUDI NEXT WEEK, AFTER MASMOUDI' S MANY
CONSULTATIONS OVER PAST WEEK WITH ARAB LEADERS, INCLUDING
PALESTINIANS, IN PARIS, GENEVA, BEIRUT, ADDIS AND TRIPOLI. I
WILL OF COURSE BE REQUESTING MEETING.

2. OFFICIAL FRENCH LANGUAGE L' ACTION PUBLISHES COMMENTARY
MAY 31 ON BOURGUIBA' S CORRIERE DELLA SERA INTERVIEW, ESSENTIALLY
STATING CERTAIN CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH POSSIBLE " DIALOGUE" IS
POSSIBLE WITH ISRAEL. THESE ARE, IN SUM, ACCEPTANCE BY ISRAEL
OF UN RESOLUTIONS, AND ISRAEL' S ADMISSION THAT PALESTINIANS
ARE NOT ONLY " HANDFUL OF REFUGEES" BUT PEOPLE WHOSE RIGHTS TO
HOMELAND ARE LEGITIMATE BECAUSE OF HISTORY AND " INTERNATIONAL
LEGISLATION". ON THIS BASIS, SAYS L' ACTION, " DIALOGUE WOULD
BE IMMINENTLY DESIREABLE. "

3. L' ACTION MENTIONS ABBA EBAN DECLARATION AT END OF EDITORIAL,
WITHOUT, HOWEVER, REPEATING WHAT HE SAID. PAPER COMMENTS ONLY
THAT EBAN' S STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTS INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN TWO
ASPECTS OF ISRAELI POLICY, WHICH WHILE ANNOUNCING POLICY OF
PEACE IN FACT FOLLOWS POLICY OF " ANNEXATION" . L' ACTION
PROMISES TO COMMENT MORE FULLY ON ABBA EBAN PRONOUNCEMENT
TOMORROW (JUNE 1).

4. COMMENT: WHILE WE STILL BELIEVE BOURGUIBA INTERESTED IN
PLAYING ROLE IN ME CONFLICT (PRIMARILY IN DIRECTION ENCOURAGING
" MODERATE" FEDAYEEN TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL DIALOGUE), WE THINK
THAT ABBA EBAN' S REPORTED ANNOUNCEMENT MAY PROVE SOMEWHAT
EMBARRASSING. INTERESTING THAT BOURGUIBA' S CABINET DIRECTOR
HABIB CHATTI TOLD ME ON MAY 29 THAT GOI HAD BEEN " MALADROIT" IN
INTS INITIAL REACTION, AND THAT ABBA EBAN COULD HAVE
" EMBASSASSED" BOURGUIBA IF HE HAD IMMEDIATELY ACCEPTED HIS
OFFER.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE REACTION IN OTHER ARAB CAPITOLS AND
ISRAEL TO THESE DEVELOPMENTS, IF THEY ENSUE.

RELPH

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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TAGS: PFOR, TS, XF
To: AF
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AMMAN
BEIRUT
JIDDA
KHARTOUM
KUWAIT

PARIS

SECSTATE WASHDC

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